SCIENCE & GOVERNMENT REPORT

17th Year of Publication
The Independent Bulletin of Science Policy

Volume XVII, Number 14 P.O. Box 6226A, Washington, D.C. 20015 September 1, 1987

Agriculture Hails R&D Reform Plan, Ignores Most of It

Warm praise but only limited substantive action—that sums up the response of the Agricultural Research Service to recommendations that its head solicited for boosting the quality of ARS's $510-million-a-year scientific programs.

The recommendations, produced by a panel convened by the National Academy of Sciences (SGR August 1, 1987), were keyed to the perception in non-agricultural science circles that ARS labs run on an old-buddy system that is insulated against competition and rigorous review. The recommendations were routed through ag's own policy shredder, the National Program Staff of the ARS, and the tattered outcome was announced last month by ARS Administrator Terry B. Kinney Jr., who had asked the Academy to prescribe for his organization. The one big change was in acceptance of urgings to bring more outsiders into the ARS project-evaluation process.

But Program Staff gagged on some aspects of that proposal. In terms of recommendation and stated response, the major items are as follows:

• ***Recommendation:*** Strengthen the project peer review system by linking its outcome "to incentives and disincentives that all ARS staff recognize and understand." ***Response:*** Revisions of the ARS research manual will reflect commitment "to utilize the best scientific approaches." But, "ARS determines its priorities and allocates resources to a specific agricultural problem in advance of the scientist preparing a project statement. Therefore, linking re sources to the quality of the project statement is not feasible." However, resources can later be shifted, depending on progress or lack of it.

• ***Recommendation:*** Increase the authority and discretionary funds of area research directors. ***Response:***

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NIH: Director's Heavy Travel Arouses Notice at Headquarters

Is James B. Wyngaarden, the Director of the National Institutes of Health, spending too much time on travels away from his headquarters post in Bethesda, Md.?

There is no objective answer to that question, since official home and away time is not prescribed for federal officials. Given the customs and yearnings of science, medicine, and academe, any NIH chief is ardently courted and routinely showered with invitations. It's important to get out there and court an agency's constituents. In addition, there are command assignments to high-level delegations sent abroad for combined scientific and political purposes.

Nonetheless, a lot of travel is purely discretionary, and, on that score, Wyngaarden is the object of an uncommon criticism on the Washington scene, where sticking close to the playing field is a primary rule of political success. "He's never here," or words to that effect, is what some NIH staff members say about their Director. The absences from Bethesda are tied to speechmaking, conferences, ceremonial occasions—all usually qualifying as official travel—plus personal time off attached to these journeys.

An examination of Wyngaarden's official travel logs, obtained by SGR under the Freedom of Information Act, indicates that Wyngaarden is indeed there in Bethesda far more often than not. But the logs show he's

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In Brief

Federal R&D spending has nearly doubled in seven years, "But 90 percent of that increase is targeted for defense R&D," reports NSF's Office of Legislative and Public Affairs. The NSF office notes that current federal support for civilian R&D "is actually down by about 14 percent from its FY 1980 level." NSF's good budgetary fortune, it says, "should be viewed as one attempt to more appropriately balance federal support for civilian R&D."

The National Academy of Sciences has listed as candidates for major studies in the earth and planetary sciences: "boom and bust in employment in petroleum industry, priority allocation of funding for the earth sciences, the oceanographic fleet in the year 2000, problems of instrumentation in earth science departments, and policy recommendations for governments in the event of global climactic change." The studies would be financed through a newly established endowment in memory of the late Maurice Ewing, for many years a major figure in oceanography.

Following his tumultuous departure from the presidency of the Howard Hughes Medical Institute (SGR May 15, 1987), former NIH Director Donald Fredrickson is back at NIH, this time as a guest researcher in the Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute, where he spent many years in the lab before and after 1966-68 service as Director of that Institute. NIH accommodates some 500 guest researchers at present, providing them with lab space and research support, but no pay.

Travel Log: NIH Head Covered a Lot of Ground in 1986

Following are the entries on the official 1986 travel log for NIH Director James B. Wyngaarden.

Date	*Destination and Purpose*	*Working Days Out of Office*
Jan. 4-8:	Palm Springs, CA, to participate in AMA Forum, "Medicine for the 21st Century."	3
Feb. 17-19:	NY, to participate in Rockefeller University Advisory Conference on "Patient-Oriented Research."	2
April 2-3:	NY, to meet with Underwriters About NIH Centennial Celebration	1/2
April 8-12:	Florence, SC, to present address, "A Look Into the Future—New Advances in Health Care" (at request of Sen. Strom Thurmond, R-SC); Palo Alto, CA, to present address, "Biomedical Research, NIH, and the Budget," AAAS Pacific Division Conference on R&D.	3 1/2
April 17-26:	London, England, to participate in Ditchley Foundation Conference on "Planning and Resource Allocation in the Fields of Science and Technology"; Heidelberg, West Germany, to present address, "Certain Aspects of Medical Research and its Support," and to participate in an International Symposium on "Perspectives on Bacterial Pathogenesis and Host Defense," at 600th anniversary of Heidelberg University; and Bonn, to meet with German research officials and US Embassy staff members.	6
May 27-29:	NY, to present address, "Research: International Cooperation and Competition," at NY State Department of Health Forum on "AIDS Impact on Public Policy."	2
June 3-7:	London, England, to address 25th European Research Council meeting.	3
June 19-25:	NY, to participate in Lasker Jury Award Meeting; Paris, to participate in 1986 International Conference on AIDS.	4
July 10-13:	NY, to present address, "The Funding of Biomedical Research," at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Research Center.	1
July 15:	NY, with Assistant Secretary of Health, to meet with NIH Centennial Underwriters.	3/4
Aug. 8-11:	Woods Hole, MA, to participate in National Academy of Sciences Joint Council	0
Aug. 19-26:	Budapest, Hungary, to present Opening Address at 14th International Cancer Congress and to meet with officials of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, the US Embassy, and Semmelweis Medical University.	5
Sept. 18-23:	Chicago, to address AMA Education and Research Foundation on "The Future of Biomedical Research"; San Juan, PR, to present keynote address, "Nurturing the Biomedical Research Enterprise," at the University of PR Medical Sciences Campus.	3
Sept. 25-26:	San Antonio, to present address, "Support of Biomedical Research in the Late 1980s," at a Clinical Immunology Conference, University of Texas Health Science Center.	
Sept. 28-29:	Philadelphia, to chair National Academy of Sciences Government-Industry-Roundtable Working Group.	1
Oct. 1-11:	Geneva, to represent the Public Health Service at the World Health Organization Advisory Committee on Medical Research; Copenhagen, to speak at the European Medical Research Council/NIH/WHO Meeting on Transfer of Information in Health.	7
Oct. 22-27:	San Francisco, to present keynote address, "Changes in the Practice of Medicine Due to New Technology," fourth International Meeting on Imaging Technology; New Orleans, to address Association of American Medical Colleges on NIH Centennial.	4
Oct. 28:	New Haven and NY for planning NIH Centennial.	1
Nov. 7-8:	Wye, Md., to participte in the 10th Aspen Communications Conference on "America's Position in the Competitive World."	1/2
Nov. 9-12:	Boston, to present keynote address at annual meeting of the American Association of University Affiliated Programs for Persons with Developmental Disabilities, and to address the Fall Meeting of the Industrial Research Institute on "Nurturing the NIH-Industrial Linkage."	1 1/4
Nov. 14-23:	Moscow, to meet with officials of USSR Academy of Medical Science and discuss status of cooperation in research (follow-up to Presidential Summit).	5
Nov. 24:	Warrenton, Va., to address Institute of Medicine Conference on Research Training.	1/4
Dec. 2-6:	Research Triangle Park, NC, to present Opening Remarks at NIH Centennial Symposium, "The Environment and Human Health: Achievements and New Directions," and to present keynote address at National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences 20th anniversary celebration.	0
Dec. 10:	NY, for planning meetings for the NIH Centennial	1/2
Dec. 17-18:	Framingham, Mass., to present opening remarks at NIH Centennial-NHLBI Tribute to the Citizens of Framingham for Their Contribution to Knowledge on the Prevention of Cardiovascular Disease.	1/2

. . . There's Nothing Left Undone at NIH, Director Says

(Continued from page 1)

been away a good deal, too, since coming to NIH in 1982 from the chairmanship of the Department of Medicine at Duke University Medical School.

In 1983, his first full year as NIH Director, with 250 working days on the federal calendar, Wyngaarden was logged for 63 "Working Days Out of Office." These involved 28 trips out of the Washington area, to destinations throughout the US and in China, Britain, Belgium, and France. Over the full year—not just working days—the listed departure and return dates spanned 111 days.

An explanatory note on Wyngaarden's "Official Travel History" states, "Difference [between dates of travel and working days out of office] includes departure after working hours, travel on weekend and federal holidays, duty at other NIH facilities, and annual leave." According to an NIH spokesman, Wyngaarden took a commission in the Public Health Service when he became Director, and is thereby entitled to 30 days leave a year; weekends away count as leave days under PHS rules, whereas they don't for other federal civil servants.

The travel logs for the following years show a pattern similar to that of 1983. In 1984, with 249 working days, Wyngaarden was listed for 65 "Working Days Out of Office," and the departure and return dates spanned 117 days.

In 1985, which contained 241 working days, Wyngaarden's "Working Days Out of Office" totaled 53, and days on which travel occurred totaled 109.

Last year, in which there were 246 working days, Wyngaarden was logged for 56 "Working Days Out of Office." These involved 24 separate trips to give talks and attend conferences all over the US and in England, Germany, Denmark, Hungary, Switzerland, and the USSR. Over the full year—not just working days—the listed departure and return dates spanned a total of 112 days.

During the 123 working days up to July 3 of this year, Wyngaarden logged 24.75 days of official travel, spread over dates totaling 70 days.

In all these years, the month-by-month distribution of travel tends to be skewed by the Congressional calendar. March and early April bring appropriations hearings for NIH, and the presence of the Director is mandatory. Over the past five years, Wyngaarden's logs show a total of only 6.5 days away from Washington during March.

Wyngaarden confirms that he has traveled considerably as Director of NIH, far more than his predecessor, he estimates. The reason, he says, is that "I discovered when I came that a great deal of misinformation and misunderstanding had developed between NIH and the biomedical community. I consciously decided to accept invitations to explain NIH."

Wyngaarden specifically referred to the stringencies of the NIH budget and the politics of animal-experimentation controls as two issues on which he undertook missionary work. He said, too, that a surge of invitations has been generated by NIH's year-long centennial observation, which runs to next October. And he points out, with evident pride and a touch of annoyance, that NIH has fared well under his regime, with the budget rising from $4 billion in fiscal 1983 to $6 billion this year. And it looks like another recordbreaker is shaping up for the next fiscal year.

The gains came despite wily attempts by the White House to crimp NIH spending. "We've had five successful years," Wyngaarden told SGR, adding that, despite his travels, "there's nothing left undone at NIH." A lot of the travel is wearying and "not glamorous," he remarked, and there's no difficulty in keeping in close touch by telephone.

The anonymous response from the travel critics is that NIH's good fortune is attributable to a friendly Congress, an approving public, strong lobbies, and an able career staff, rather than powerful leadership from its Director. No one has pinpointed for SGR anything of importance that's been adversely affected by Wyngaarden's absences. It's worth noting, too, that, contrary to appearances, NIH is more of a federation of Congressionally created semi-autonomous baronies than a monolithic agency. Wyngaarden's predecessor and old colleague, Donald Fredrickson, remarked that the directorship is "like being the President of Switzerland."

One senior, veteran NIH official offered SGR a balanced, knowledgeable appraisal of the Wyngaarden regime: "Jim's not the most forceful, hands-on Director. But he's done a great job under difficult circumstances"—a reference to perpetual policy chaos in the upper levels of NIH's parent agency, the Department of Health and Human Services, and OMB's ceaseless

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ISSN 0048-9581

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Independently published by *Science & Government Report, Inc.*, twice monthly, except once each in January, July, August, and September. Annual subscription: Institutions, $225.00 (two years, $395.00). Information about bulk and individual rates upon request. Editorial offices at 3736 Kanawha St. N.W., Washington, DC 20015. Tel. (202) 244-4135. Second-class postage at Washington, D.C. Please address all subscription correspondence to Box 6226A, Northwest Station, Washington, DC 20015. Reproduction without permission is prohibited. SGR is available on University Microfilms International. Claims for missing back issues will be filled without charge if made within six weeks of publication date.

NSF Heads Defend Superconductivity Budget, Caution Japan

Washington's chattiest research executives, NSF Director Erich Bloch and NSF Board Chairman Roland W. Schmitt (GE Senior Vice President and Chief Scientist) met with the press, as is their custom, following the monthly meeting of the National Science Board, August 21, in Washington. Following are excerpts, transcribed and edited by SGR.

•

Q. Do you think it's wise for the Defense Department to be given so prominent a role in the Administration's program for the commercialization of superconductivity?

Bloch. A lot of money? Is that what you're referring to? Yeah, I think it's proper for Defense to focus on superconductivity, because they are certainly a user of those products. They also have a big part of the R&D budget of the federal government.

Q. Their record in commercialization is open to question.

Schmitt. The fact is that, unless and until the problem of current density gets solved, my guess is that the main additional applications are likely to be in the aerospace and defense area. At this moment, it doesn't seem to me that that's necessarily out of balance. In general, I would like to see DoD keep a heavy commitment in 6.1 type of expenditures [the basic research category in the Defense budget].

Bloch. In that 11-point program [for commercialization] which the President announced at the conference [July 28-29], he identified the Department of Energy and NASA, NSF, the National Bureau of Standards, in addition to Defense. So, he's not just focusing on Defense as the only source.

Q. But the only new money is $150 million for DoD.

Bloch. Because that's where the big money is.

Schmitt. What I would hope is that DARPA [Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency] gets its procurement process straightened out. It would be a shame if people have to sit around waiting a year for some of that money to get committed.

Q. Is that a possibility?

Schmitt. Judging by the problems that DARPA has had in the past, it would be. I am told they are setting up special means to assure that doesn't happen with this money. But that's been a really very bad problem over there.

Q. Have there been proposals submitted to NSF on superconductivity?

Bloch. Absolutely. I think we have moved very rapidly and have done things which we normally don't do, like reallocating dollars in the middle of the year.

Schmitt. The US has moved at least as rapidly—in my opinion more rapidly—than Japan has, up this point.

Bloch. One of the things we are singling out in the budget request [for fiscal 1989, which begins next October 1] is a focus on materials research in general and that includes superconductivity. I would also predict that the Science and Technology Centers [campus-based facilities to be established under a new NSF program; SGR July 1, 1987] will attract a lot of proposals out of that area. While you might not find a particular [budget] line item that's called superconductivity, it's certainly in the materials research area, in the science and technology centers, and in some of the engineering areas.

Q. Given the multi-national genesis of the recent developments in superconductivity, what do you think of the exclusion of foreigners from the big Washington conference in July?

Schmitt. It was not a scientific conference. I don't think it's a big deal.

Q. Some foreigners think it's a big deal.

Schmitt. Maybe because they didn't know what went on at the conference. No new scientific results were presented, no scientific papers were presented. It was a conference on other issues. Whatever the optics might appear to be, the substance of it is that I don't think it was terribly important.

Q. Symbolically, wasn't it offensive?

Schmitt. You have to ask the people who were subject to the decision.

Q. They say it was.

Schmitt. I can't answer for them on that.

Q. One of the proposals in the President's 11-point plan would be to change the Freedom of Information Act to exclude foreigners from gaining access to the results of

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NIH *(Continued from page 3)*

scheming to throttle NIH's Congressionally driven budget growth. "He's turned Koop around on a lot of issues," says this colleague in regard to Wyngaarden's hierarchical superior, Surgeon General C. Everett Koop. Noting that Fredrickson "was a stickler for being around NIH," SGR's commentator said that "the travel is beneficial, because it tells you what's going on in the academic community. Wyngaarden's not being there has minimal impact. I've always been able to reach him when I needed to."

The fact remains, however, that the Director can function as the leading spokesman and political operative for the biomedical community. Fredrickson did that during his tenure, 1975-81, as did the legendary James Shannon, who brought NIH into the modern age during the longest reign of any Director, 1955-68.

Over the past five years, NIH has defeated the Administration's budget cutters and has eluded attempts to enlist it in the high-tech industrial competitiveness fad—*a la* that new White House favorite, the politically smartstepping National Science Foundation.

The unknown in this success story is the role played by NIH's avowedly itinerant Director.—DSG

. . . We've Got to Insist on Reciprocity in Access to R&D

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superconductive research in government labs. Do you think that's a good idea?

Schmitt. Heretofore, not all of the Japanese labs have been open to the US, by a long shot. The Japanese have stated as one of three items of their national policy that they want to internationalize their own research. It will interesting to follow and see whether in fact they put that into practice. I think it's reasonable to move forward in this thing in a *quid pro quo* kind of basis. So, let's let that evolve on both sides.

Bloch. It will find its own level.

Schmitt. An industrial laboratory always has to balance retaining proprietary interest on the one hand while participating fully in the scientific community on the other. I think laboratories like Bell, GE, DuPont, IBM, and all the others have found that balance very well. I realize the balance in [the government's] national labs and universities is different from that. I'm one who strongly believes in the internationalization of science, but it ought to occur equally everywhere.

Bloch. And as other countries do more in basic research, like Japan wants to do, I think we've got to insist that there is this reciprocity.

Q. *One of the problems with international cooperation is that Japan's system is quite different from the US system. Most of the research is concentrated in private companies. There's a structural difference that makes things difficult to do.*

Schmitt. The [Japanese] Science and Technolgy Agency and MITI [Ministry of International Trade and Industry] both have large numbers of national laboratories. They have stated their intention to open those up more to international participation. And there is some indication that they are serious about that, but I think we have to move forward in that and make sure that really happens and that we get reciprocity.

Bloch. In the MITI laboratories, and in the ETL [Electrotechnical Laboratory], one of the foremost research laboratories in computer science, microelectronics—I got in there in 1981 as a visitor. I was one of the first foreign visitors. Before that, you couldn't even get in. They have come a long way, but not far enough.

Schmitt. Another interesting example is Harwell [a major British research center.] You go back when [former Director] Walter Marshall started putting in place the commercial activities of Harwell and I remember very vividly at the time he said, "My principle is one of maximum unfairness." He had in mind that he was going to have exclusive deals with particular companies and he was going to keep other companies out and he thought that was the best way of commercializing things. That, I might say, is a policy that we couldn't have followed in the US, although it sounds like a good idea to me. If you want to commercialize, you've got to give the company that's going to put a lot of investment into it some means of getting a return on that investment.

Bloch. There's another aspect to it. The Japanese have made it very clear that they want to increase not only their basic research but also do more basic research in universities. You can't just look at the past. You've got to really look at the future, and we've got to insist in that case that we have access to the universities, which might become more important in terms of basic research results than they have been in the past.

Schmitt. That's certainly been true in the superconductivity area, where they had that very fine project sponsored by the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture, with 20 or so university researchers participating for three years. And they were absolutely primed and ready to take on this discovery at universities.

Q. *Do you see the Japanese, in fact, opening their laboratories to Western visitors?*

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Quotes: Provincial Engineers

"US industrial success earlier in this century has led to an attitude of superiority and prejudice against the need to learn what the rest of the world is doing. There is a reluctance to recognize that the immediate post-World War II period of US economic dominance has come to an end. A bias against using what is 'not invented here' is embedded in many organizational cultures; many are disinclined to look outside established networks for knowledge and partners. Foreign travel is viewed intrinsically as a waste of time and money by some company and university administrators . . . .

"Among the concerns the committee encountered was the increasing perception that for national security reasons, the United States restricts, and in some cases withholds, information and technology from traditional or perspective partners. Several of our colleagues abroad mentioned actions such as the closing of US conferences to foreign nationals, screening unclassified papers at US conferences, and trade restrictions on exports of instrumentation and computers to be used for research. Concern was voiced not only about specific actions, but also about their apparent inconsistency from a policy viewpoint."

From *Strengthening US Engineering Through International Cooperation: Some Recommendations for Action* (68 pages), report by the National Academy of Engineering, available without charge from the NAE, Office of Administration and Finance, 2101 Constitution Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20418; tel. 202/334-2195.

. . . US Monitoring of Japanese R&D Lacks Coordination

(Continued from page 5)

Bloch. There is action. At ICOT [Institute for the New Generation of Computer Technology, in Tokyo], we have the right to send two or three people over there for extended stays. You couldn't have done that two, three years ago. We're in the process of identifying people and moving them over there. In general, ETL [Electrotechnical Laboratory] has opened up. We have had some offers and indications from individual companies to open up or to accept some foreign visitors, again for extended stays, in their laboratories, like GE, IBM, and AT&T and others do in theirs. We also have increased our surveillance of the Japanese literature through our office in Japan.

Schmitt. I think that the different agencies of the US government and some of the representatives in Japan for American firms aren't well enough coordinated and don't work cooperatively in Japan in getting information. Every agency and every company essentially does its own thing right now, perhaps with very loose connections. But I think someone ought to think that through and get a lot better system over there. At the Superconductivity Conference [July, in Washington], I was kind of disturbed in looking at the various [government agency publications] that only six conferences were listed, and those were all international conferences that had long ago been scheduled. You didn't find any items in those lists that pertained to special, recently initiated conferences, which, in fact, are going on over there. It a little bit disturbing to see that one tiny symptom and to ask yourself, is our information-collection system failing us over there?

Bloch. I think that's a valid point.

Q. *NSF recently issued regulations on scientific misconduct. Does this reflect concern that a serious problem exists?*

Bloch. No. This is something which has been on the agenda for a long, and it's about time that we put it in place. We followed the NIH lead in that, but we have no indication that there is more or less of that problem around. We have seen a lot of publicity on it in certain areas—not in areas that we are dealing with, not with our grantees. We have always had a case here and there, and we have that today, but it's not increasing or decreasing. It's at a very low level, but it's very important that we have regulations in place in case that happens, so we can move very quickly and in the right way. It's not a big item with us.

Q. *Are you concerned about the volume of man hours that goes into applying for programs that in the end give out relativley minor sums of money? The 150 Engineering Research Centers applications required a prodigious amount of work. They asked for $2 billion altogether, and in the end you gave out $25 million for the first year.*

Bloch. That's about right. Sure, I'm concerned about it. But, on the other hand, there's another side to that. The fact that a university puts a proposal together really helps them on understanding that particular area better, getting departments to work together. And many of them have taken proposals which were declined here and taken them somewhere else. State and private money has flowed into it. So, the applications had a life after we turned them down. From that viewpoint, I don't think that's lost resources. It's disappointment, no doubt about it, and sometimes it is lost.

ARS Rejects Recommendation For National Advisory Body

(Continued from page 1)

Area directors "are responsible for the success of the researchers and do reward top performers. Their discretionary funds . . . are sufficient and are enhanced by funds from headquarters when appropriate."

• ***Recommendation:*** Use project reviewers in addition to those suggested by the scientist under review and bring in a "reasonable number" of outside reviewees. ***Response:*** Research leaders are being instructed "to broaden the list of suggested reviewers from 6 to 10, with at least 3 from universities and 3 from industry, and the remaining from ARS or other federal agencies" but none from the applicant's own lab.

• ***Recommendation:*** Establish outside advisory committees to assist in identifying project reviewers and to conduct "periodic oversight reviews." ***Response:*** ARS already utilizes many advisers. "We do not feel that there is a need for an advisory committee at the national or area level."

• ***Recommendation:*** Seek authority to lengthen the present one-year limit on non-tenured employment to improve evaluation of prospective tenure appointments. ***Response:*** ARS supports the recommendation. "However, ARS must follow current rules of the Office of Personnel Management," from which a modification is being sought.

In a statement accompanying the response to the Academy recommendations, ARS Administrator Kinney stated: "ARS is not a granting agency like the National Institutes of Health and the National Science Foundation. Our funds are appropriated by Congress for specific research programs. We then turn to peer review, including outside scientists, to help answer two questions about each proposed research project: Will it contribute to solution of the problem? Is it good research from a scientific viewpoint?"

In Print: NSF Bibliography, GAO Reports on R&D Agencies

The following publications are obtainable as indicated—not from SGR.

Publications of the National Science Foundation (18 pages), a bibliography covering a wide span of subjects, including NSF's compilations of national and international R&D statistics, program guides for NSF's disciplinary directorates, texts of cooperative research agreements with many nations, reports on the state of research in several fields, etc. Included are instructions on how to order the publications, most of which are free or inexpensive.

The bibliography is available without charge from Forms and Publications, National Science Foundation, 1800 G St. NW, Washington, DC 20550; tel. 202/357-7861.

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Reflecting Congress's growing interest in the fine details of R&D policymaking, the General Accounting Office (GAO), Capitol Hill's own investigating agency, has in recent times been looking deeper than ever, as evidenced in several recent reports, to members and committies, including:

Concerns about DOE's Super Collider Site Selection Process (GAO/RCED-87-175FS; 23 pages), a report requested by Senator Max Baucus (D-Mont.), who asked GAO to tally the precedents for federal agencies awarding points for state and local contributions in deciding where to locate sought-after US research facilities—in this case, the $4.4-billion SSC. The issue is moot since Congress barred DOE from considering free land, cost sharing and other lures (SGR June 1, 1987) in selecting the SSC site. GAO reports that sweeteners are not unprecedented in federal R&D site selecting, but the use has been limited. It notes that NSF has required or suggested matching funds for several major facilities, including the Earthquake Engineering Research Center and the Advanced Scientific Computing Centers, but the practice is not followed by NIH, NASA, or the Department of Defense.

Small Business Innovation Research Participants Give Program High Marks (GAO/RCED-87-161BR; 55 pages), requested by several influential House and Senate chairman, this report describes evaluations received from managers of 79 percent of the 1405 projects funded during fiscal 1983-85 under legislation requiring most federal R&D agencies to work toward awarding small firms what is now a 1.25 percent share of their extramural R&D funds. The recipients, eligible for awards ranging from $50,000 to $500,000, are mostly young, small firms, GAO found. They had some quibbles, particularly about delays in moving from small startup awards to larger funds, but few other complaints were noted by the GAO investigators.

Space Station: National Aeronautics and Space Administration 1987 Cost Estimates (GAO/NSIAD-87-180FS; 17 pages), requested by Chairman Robert A. Roe of the House Science, Space, and Technology Committee, this report tracks the financial fairy tales of the space station—estimated by NASA at $8 billion in 1984 and now listed for about double that (still in 1984 dollars) by the GAO and NASA itself.

The GAO reports are available without charge from GAO, PO Box 6015, Gaithersburg, Md. 20877; tel. 202/275-6241.

Job Changes

Jean-Claude Derian, Science Counselor at the French Embassy in Washington, will be succeeded in October by ***Michel Aubry***, of the Ministry of Higher Education and Research. Also leaving Washington, ***Anthony R. Cox***, Science Counselor at the British Embassy, who will be replaced in November by ***Alistair Allcock***, of the Department of Trade and Industry.

Serving as Acting President of the Carnegie Institution of Washington is ***Edward E. David Jr.***, former White House Science Adviser and former President of Exxon Research and Engineering. David, a Carnegie trustee, will hold the post until the end of March, when ***Maxine Singer***, of NIH, succeeds ***James D. Ebert***, who has retired.

At NSF, ***Mary E. Clutter*** is returning to the director ship of the Division of Cellular Biosciences following a stint as Senior Science Adviser to the NSF Director; she'll be succeeded by ***James F. Hays***, Director of the Division of Earth Sciences. ***John Connolly***, head of Advanced Scientific Computing, is leaving to become the Director of the Center for Computational Science at the University of Kentucky.

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Fraud in Research: Scientists, Lawyers to Hold Meeting

Psst. Wanna hear a semi-secret?

A bunch of lawyers, scientists, and assorted academic specialists, bankrolled with $25,000 from the Sloan Foundation, plan to hole up at a remote conference center in West Virgina over the weekend of September 18-20, for a "Workshop on Scientific Fraud and Misconduct." The meeting is sponsored by the Conference of Lawyers and Scientists, a joint venture of the American Bar Association and the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

Among the 30 or so tentatively scheduled to participate are Donald Kennedy, President of Stanford University; Lewis Branscomb, of Harvard, formerly Chief Scientist of IBM; Lawrence Bogorod, AAAS Board Chairman; Benjamin Lewin, editor of *Cell;* Mary Miers, chief of the fraud squad at NIH, and Robert M. Anderson, NSF Deputy General Counsel.

The conference has not been publicly announced. But, at the AAAS, which is managing logistics, the plans are acknowledged in response to inquiries. The press is not invited to attend, SGR was told by Albert H. Teich, head of the AAAS Office of Public Sector Programs. But reporters who wish to attend may possibly be admitted if they apply in writing and agree to cover the meeting "on a background basis."

What does that mean? he was asked—a question reflecting that there's no generally accepted definition of "background," beyond a muddled understanding that it is a device for reporting information, such as positions and plans, without explicitly identifying the source. Why should a conference on scientific rectitude employ reporting rules geared to concealment. Aren't all the participants publicly willing to stand by what they say at the conference?

Teich said he didn't know why coverage would be restricted to "background" only. In a later conversation, he said the format for coverage had not been finally settled. A lawyer on the tentative agenda referred SGR to the chief of the legal side of the alliance, Joseph Onek, a Washington attorney. Onek said he couldn't remember what had been decided about press coverage, though he said he dimly recalled that "background only" had been adopted. He said he would call back—which, at press time, two days later—he had not done. Onek did offer, however, that he thought Teich was on top of details for the meeting.

Many questions arise, including: Should employes of NSF, NIH, and other federal agencies officially participate in meetings on matters of public concern at which press coverage is tied to anonymity?

Is public confidence in science likely to be reinforced by the furtive nature of the conference?

It's often claimed that "background" encourages candor, but the record shows that it can be a boon to irresponsibility, deception, and confusion. Its wide use may be justified on the grounds that publicly important, sensitive information from deep inside government is far less likely to come into the open if the source is identifiable. But sparing use, in only necessary circumstances, should be the threshold rule. A weekend bull session on scientific fraud doesn't meet the rule.

The conference will be held at The Woods, near Hedgesville, W. Va., about a two-hour drive from Washington, DC. Teich's office phone number is 202/326-6600.—DSG

PS You didn't read about it here. This is on background.

SGR Summer Schedule

The next issue of *Science & Government Report* will be published October 1, 1987.

Science & Government Report
Northwest Station
Box 6226A
Washington, D.C. 20015

Second class postage paid at Washington, D.C.

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